

REMARKS

In response to the pending rejection, for the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references are not prior art to the instant application, and as a result, the rejections must be withdrawn. Furthermore, Applicants have added new claims 6 and 7, which depend on claims 1 and 4, respectively, so as to recite additional aspects of the present invention not previously claimed. No new matter has been added.

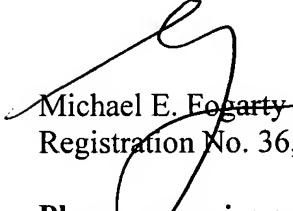
The pending claims have been rejected as either being anticipated by USP No. 6,770,960 to Oohata or USP No. 6,815,790 to Bui. Oohata has an effective filing date of December 3, 2002, and Bui has an effective filing date of January 10, 2003. The instant application, which is a continuation of PCT/JP03/00398, which was filed on January 20, 2003, claims priority to JP 2002-11337, which was filed on January 21, 2002. A certified translation of the Japanese priority document is being submitted herewith in order to perfect the claim of priority. As such, the effective filing date of the instant application is January 21, 2002, which precedes the effective filing date of both Oohata and Bui. Thus, neither Oohata nor Bui represent valid prior art to the instant application, and as a result, the pending rejections must be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is urged that the application is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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